

Meet Our Partners – Kenya – Dr. Ali Adan



1. How did people in Kenya respond to the research and data collection?

The institutions engaged during the research were positive, supportive, and accepting to be part of the study. At first, they were suspicious but after a conversation with them and creating awareness on the study's objective plus receiving an introduction from the University research innovation and outreach affairs department, their concerns were addressed. Thereafter, the students and teachers participated in the questionnaire survey. Time was a bit challenging since the survey interrupted some hours of planned teaching.

2. Are there any success stories or challenges you can share about conducting this type of survey?

So far, we didn't go back to the project participating institutions for follow-up. The research results were also not disseminated locally due to the Covid-19 pandemic and financial limitations. But I must confirm the IIIT completed the data analysis successfully and even developed a high-quality research report which they shared in both soft and hard copies. This report now needs to be distributed to the participating institutions, especially hardcopies. The time to collect massive data from universities, colleges, and secondary schools in different counties was short. The hosting universities like Umma and others should consider such projects and mainstream them in their academic and research calendar so that annual workshops and conferences can occur to keep generating the lessons learned and for future planning. The participating universities can also be requested to establish "AEMS research working groups" to develop occasional papers from the series for scientific publication, build community and stakeholder awareness, and influence policy.

3. What are some of the implications of this research for your community in Kenya?

Muslims in Kenya face an education crisis. For example, madrasa and qur'anic schools are yet to be integrated into the country's basic education program. Muslim secondary schools in the country have challenges that may be related to the fact that we do not address the topic of akhalaq (loosely translated as moral values), or because of inadequate mentorship (Taarbia), and poor quality of knowledge. Therefore, a well-developed project of AEMS could be a big blessing to address such Muslim educational issues where AEMS research project is integrated with the capacity building component for teachers and administrators.

In order to disseminate the two AEMS studies' findings in Kenya, IIIT in partnership with Umma University and other Muslim organizations should organize a series of awareness creation workshops with the objective of enhancing and strengthening universal AEMS values and practices.

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His current research interests span across a wide interdisciplinary area of Islam and environmental science, climate change, food security, water, waste management, community support systems, and interreligious dialogue and social transformation for peace building and sustainable development.